—Staff Moo

Housewives Tell Of Concern About Strike, Racial Tension

p23 3/8/68 CA. By JOSEPH SWEAT

Mayor Henry Loeb's open house took on an argumentative tone yesterday when 18 fashionably dressed women expressed deep concern about the continuing sanitation strike and the racial tension that has grown out of it. All but two of the women told the mayor they did not agree with the stand he has taken in the strike.

The other two indicated after the meeting that they agreed with Mr. Loeb's opposition to a union dues checkoff and a written contract but, as one of them put it, "I don't think these things are important enough for us to risk racial turmoil."

The women listed their names and addresses as a group but declined to be quoted individually by name.

"We read the letters in the paper and we just don't want a bunch of kooks calling us all through the night," said one in explanation.

Mayor Loeb carefully explained his position in the strike and answered their questions, at times raising his voice to show his firmness.

"If you won't give any further and the Negro community won't give any further and we have racial conflict, what has been gained?" asked one of the visitors.

"You must do what you think is right and you can't do what you think is expedient," Mr. Loeb said.

"I think we disagree where your moral duty lies," said a woman in a orange checked coat. "We seem to think it lies in one direction and you seem to think it lies in another direction."

When the mayor said that an "overwhelming majority of the people in Memphis are against a union dues checkoff," a lady with a brightly-colored shawl replied: "How do you know that?"

"By the most overwhelming amount of mail I have ever received on any subject," the mayor said.

"But there are a lot of people who don't feel that way," said a women in a brown hat.

"And what is the difference in a union dues checkoff and allowing SUN (Shelby United Neighbors) deductions from pay checks," asked the one in the orange checked coat.

"A tremendous difference," Mr. Loeb said in a loud voice. "We must respect what a majority of the people are for. I think everyone supports deductions for SUN."

A woman in a black dress told the mayor shortly before the group left: "We just felt that someone from the middle-class white community should give you a different view. The financial problems you have mentioned are financial problems that face all cities. What we are more interested in is that this city has racial peace."

The women listed themselves as:

Mrs. David Portman, 5151 Sequoia; Mrs. D. J. Doughty, 1796 Forrest; Mrs. John P. Beifuss, 445 Meadowcrest Circle; Mrs. Jesse Garner, 785 Beasley; Mrs. Harold Davis, 44 South Rembert.

Mrs. Jon Swink, 3630 Allandale Road; Mrs. Wilson Viar Jr., 269 Mary Ann Drive; Mrs. Fred L. Bryant, 2153 Sussex; Mrs. A. E. Cox, 933 Chambliss Road; Glenda M. Moon, 2876 Knightway Cove; Mrs. Patricia H. Gillionf, 3017 Dumbarton Road; Mrs. Carol Ann Smalley, 2246 Henry.

Mrs. Louise S. Olds, 949 Mosby; Mrs. W. D. Pattigl, 340 North McLean; Mrs. John L. Streete, 1947 Snowden; Mrs. Kirk Johnson, 3411 Northmoor; Mrs. Arthur Yehle, 3100 Homewood Drive; and Mrs. Eugene Warren, 7505 Parker Circle.

The group — or rather their husbands —represent a fairly broad cross-section of the businesses and professions, with a number being the wives of college professors. At least one has direct knowledge of the situation. Mrs. Moon's husband, the Rev. Dick Moon, Presbyterian chaplain at Memphis State, was among those arrested at City Hall Tuesday.

Most of the mayor's other open house visitors indicated their support of his strike stand.

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